

## TIDBITS

## tips and helpful links



## ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations and assistive technology are two methods available to IEP teams to attempt to “level the playing field” for SPED students. By providing appropriate tools and practices, then monitoring for effectiveness, these options make it possible for students to have meaningful access and learning as the effects of their disabilities are diminished. As we enter into the third quarter of the school year, it’s a good time to re-evaluate the accommodations and assistive technology we are providing each of our students.

## Assistive

## Technology

## Lending Libraries

## in AZ:

Flagstaff::

[nau.edu/SBS/IHD](http://nau.edu/SBS/IHD)

Phoenix:

[www.adeatloan.org](http://www.adeatloan.org)

Tucson:

[tact1@qwestoffice.net](mailto:tact1@qwestoffice.net)

- Cross-check to be sure that you are employing all the accommodations designated for AIMS testing in your everyday lessons and district assessments (as per Federal and State regulation). (See <http://www.azed.gov/standards-development-assessment/files/2011/08/testingaccommodations2011-12.pdf> )
- Consider how successful each accommodation has been in assisting the student's access to instruction and assessment:

Are there any other measures you can take (either AT or accommodations) to enhance access for the student? Explore the world of assistive technology -keep abreast of what's new by consulting with specialists in your district (technology department, speech, OT, PT) and by contacting one of the AT lending libraries across AZ. You just may find a key to opening a pathway or stimulating motivation in a student.

For those accommodations that are not yielding expected results, consider tweaking or eliminating them during an IEP review.

Remember that although accommodations and AT are critical at a point in time, the ultimate goal is for students to function as independently as possible. Phasing them out, as appropriate, will foster greater independence.

## CHECK OUT THE NEW RUBRIC

Audra Ahumada, the ADE AIMS-A Coordinator, has developed a video demonstration utilizing the new rubric for a variety of classroom lessons. It features students responding to reading, math, and science items. We hope it clarifies procedures for its use and gives you ideas on how you can incorporate it into your daily lessons and formative assessments.

We look forward to your feedback on the rubric. Please try it out and share your experiences with us! We are here to support you.

To access the videos, log onto IDEAL: <https://www.ideal.azed.gov/p/> . By signing in and completing the required information, you will receive a username and password to access materials on the IDEAL website. Once you have access to IDEAL, sign in and the videos can be accessed through “Curriculum Resources” located on the left side menu. Then scroll down to AIMS Resources or “Learning Resource Manager” and type AIMS A in the keyword box.

*tips and helpful links***Creating Classroom Assessments**

Here are some interesting findings to remember when creating your next assessment.

Did you know that for some students...

- it is difficult to read black on white? Try using a color overlay. This is a standard accommodation.
- some images in text and tests actually take away from comprehension? If it doesn't help with understanding text, don't include it.
- justifying text to align both left and right actually can disrupt the natural flow of reading? Keep it left justified.
- certain fonts are difficult to read? Keep the type face simple and large enough to see.

And, here are some questions to ask yourself from [www.ETS.org](http://www.ETS.org)...

- What am I trying to find out about my students' learning?
- What learning goals or outcomes do I want to measure?
- What kind of evidence do I need to show that my students have achieved the goals I am trying to measure? (mastery, performance score)
- What kind of assessment will give me that evidence? (multiple choice, short-answer, essays, speeches, demonstrations, activities)

[http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL\\_Institutional\\_Testing\\_Program/ELLM2002.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL_Institutional_Testing_Program/ELLM2002.pdf)



It is difficult to take time away from the classroom to attend professional development seminars or even to collaborate with peers. This monthly flyer will hopefully provide some interesting information to remember when lesson planning and present some new tips and strategies to use in the classroom. If you have any successful strategies or stories to share, or have some suggestions for current

**Student Ownership of Assessment**

Sometimes it seems like all we do in the classroom is assess. We pre-test and post-test weekly; we use formative assessments daily; we give benchmark assessments and district assessments; and then we test our students with AIMS. It can be difficult for any student to take so many tests, but it can be especially disturbing for students with disabilities.

We know that students get tired of taking tests. Many times they don't feel successful because they do not always score as well as they would like. They may also just go through the motions and fill in the answers because of the difficulty of the test.

One tip that may help students with summative and formal assessments is to create student ownership. A sense of ownership for anything can help to create a sense of interest and importance. The next time your students need to take a district or state assessment, try these suggestions:

- Thoroughly explain the purpose of the test. The student will then know that it is not just because he "has to".
- Go over what the scores on the test mean. It is not merely a number.
- Show the students what their previous scores were and what they mean. Many times students take tests and receive no feedback.
- Create realistic individual and class level goals for the test. This can really help to create the buy-in.
- Celebrate the effort and improvements made on the assessments. Success breeds further success.
- Reviewing this information on a regular basis, such as a quarterly goal-setting conference, will help maintain student focus.